

FINAL RECORD OF THE ONE HUNDRED AND TWENTIETH MEETING

held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,  
on Thursday, 2 April 1981, at 10.30 a.m.

Chairman: Mr. G. Pfeiffer (Federal Republic of Germany)

## PRESENT AT THE TABLE

Algeria: Mr. A. SALAH-BEY  
Mr. M. MEDKOUR  
Mr. A. ABBA  
Mr. M. MATI

Argentina: Miss N. FREYRE PENABAD

Australia: Mr. R.A. WALKER  
Mr. R. STEELE

Belgium: Mr. A. ONKELINX  
Mr. J.M. NOIRFALISSE

Brazil: Mr. C.A. DE SOUZA E SILVA  
Mr. S. DE QUEIROZ DUARTE

Bulgaria: Mr. I. SOTIROV  
Mr. R. DEYANOV  
Mrs. V. SOTIZOV

Burma: U THAN HTUN

Canada: Mr. G. SKINNER

China: Mr. YU Peiwen  
Mr. LIN Chen  
Mr. PAN Jusheng

Cuba: Mr. L. SOLA VILA  
Mr. C. PAZOS

Czechoslovakia: Mr. P. LUKES  
Mr. J. JIRUSEK  
Mr. L. STAVINOHÁ  
Mr. J. MORAVIC

Egypt: Mr. E.S.A.R. EL REEDY  
Mr. I.A. HASSAN  
Mr. E. EZZ

Ethiopia:

Mr. T. TERREFE  
Mr. F. YOHANNES

France:

Mr. F. DE LA GORCE  
Mr. J. DE BEAUSSE  
Mr. GESBERT  
Mr. M. COUTHURES

German Democratic Republic:

Mr. G. HERDER  
Mr. H. THIELICKE  
Mr. M. KAULFUSS  
Mr. P. BUNTIG

Germany, Federal Republic of:

Mr. G. PFEIFFER  
Mr. N. KLINGLER  
Mr. H. MULLER  
Mr. W. ROHR  
Mr. J. PFISCHKE

Hungary:

Mr. I. KOMIVES  
Mr. C. GYORFFY  
Mr. A. LAKATOS

India:

Mr. A.P. VENKATESWARAN  
Mr. S. SARAN

Indonesia:

Mr. S. DARUSMAN  
Mr. F. QASIM  
Mr. J. HADI  
Mr. KARYONO

Iran:

Mr. J. ZAHIRNIA

Italy:

Mr. V.C. DI MONTEZEMOLO  
Mr. B. CABRAS  
Mr. E. DI GIOVANNI

Japan:

Mr. Y. OKAWA  
Mr. M. TAKAHASHI  
Mr. R. ISHII  
Mr. K. SHIMADA  
Mr. K. ODA

Kenya: Mr. S. SHITEMI  
Mr. G. MUNIU

Mexico: Mr. A. GARCIA ROBLES  
Mrs. Z. GONZALES Y REYNERO

Mongolia: Mr. D. ERDEMBILEG  
Mr. L. BAYART

Morocco: Mr. M. CHRAIBI

Netherlands: Mr. R.H. FEIN  
Mr. H. WAGENMAKERS  
Mr. A.G.B. OOMS  
Ms. A. AMERANGEN

Nigeria: Mr. T. AGUIYI-IRONSI  
Mr. W.O. AKINSANYA

Pakistan: Mr. M. AKRAM

Peru: Mr. P. PARESES PORTELLA

Poland: Mr. J. WIEJACZ  
Mr. WYZNER  
Mr. B. SUJKA  
Mr. J. CIALOWICZ  
Mr. T. STROJWAS

Romania: Mr. A. SASUV

Sri Lanka: Mr. H.M.G.S. PALIHAKKARA

Sweden: Mr. C. LIDGARD  
Mr. L. NORBERG  
Mr. S. ERICSON  
Mr. G. EKHOLM  
Mr. J. LUNDIN  
Mr. H. BERGLUND

Union of Soviet Socialist  
Republics:

Mr. V.L. ISSRAELYAN  
Mr. L.A. NAUMOV  
Mr. V.A. PERFILIEV  
Mr. L.S. MOSHKOV  
Mr. V.V. LOSHCHININE  
Mr. Y.V. KOSTENKO  
Mr. S.N. RIUKHINE

United Kingdom:

Mr. D.M. SUMMERHAYES  
Mrs. J.I. LINK  
Mr. T.D. INCH

United States of America:

Mr. C.C. FLOWERREE  
Mr. F.P. DESIMONE  
Ms. K. CRITTENBLERGER  
Mr. J.A. MISKEL  
Mr. C. PEARCY

Venezuela:

Mr. A.R. TAYLHARDAT  
Mr. H. ARTEAGA  
Mr. O.A. AGUILAR

Yugoslavia:

Mr. M. VRHUNEC  
Mr. B. BRANKOVIC

Zaire:

Mr. L.B. NDAGA

Secretary of the Committee and  
Personal Representative of  
the Secretary-General:

Mr. R. JAIPAL

Deputy Secretary of the Committee:

Mr. V. BERASATEGUI

The CHAIRMAN: I declare open the 120th plenary meeting of the Committee on Disarmament.

As this is the first time I am taking the floor in my capacity as Chairman for the month of April, I should like to use the occasion to thank my two predecessors in the chair this year, Ambassador Dr. Gerhard Herder of the German Democratic Republic and Ambassador François de la Gorce of France, for their outstanding work. Thanks to their untiring efforts the Committee was able to solve its procedural questions in a remarkably short time and start its substantive work immediately.

The Committee has been working hard since the opening of its session on 3 February 1981. The work was resumed in all the four working groups which the Committee had set up in 1980. Under their devoted and able Chairmen, the working groups on chemical weapons, radiological weapons, negative security assurances and the comprehensive programme of disarmament have already covered much ground. In some cases the process of formulating concrete texts has in fact started.

At the same time, the substantial debate on various items of the agenda has continued in plenary meetings. In informal meetings of the Committee additional requests were taken up and compromise solutions were found. They provided for a possibility to continue exchanges of views on items 1 and 2 of the agenda.

This means in practice that delegations have to deal with nearly all the items on our agenda at the same time. A glance at the weekly time-table for meetings to be held shows the immense workload the Committee and each individual delegation are carrying. It will be my endeavour to maintain this active working spirit and to see to it that equitable and practical solutions are found.

According to paragraph 120 of the Final Document of the General Assembly's first special session devoted to disarmament, our Committee is the single multilateral disarmament negotiating body. It is therefore expected to negotiate, i.e., to agree on and to formulate treaty texts and other documents as, for example, the comprehensive programme of disarmament. I am confident that as a result of our continued and, I hope, still intensifying co-operation we shall be able to submit concrete texts and proposals for further action to the General Assembly at its thirty-sixth session and at its second special session devoted entirely to questions of disarmament and arms control.

It is obvious that the work of the Committee on Disarmament will make an impact on the debates to be held during these sessions. The international community expects the Committee to make a substantive contribution to the arms control and disarmament dialogue. Not much time is left; that is why we have to use it to the best of our abilities. I entreat every delegation to co-operate with others in a spirit of compromise so as to enable the Committee to reach concrete results. I for my part pledge myself to do everything to further such co-operation which will hopefully lead to the speedy attainment of the solutions which the international community expects from us.

I would like now to extend a warm welcome in the Committee to His Excellency Mr. Józef Wiejacz, Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Polish People's Republic.

Mr. Józef Wiejacz was appointed Vice-Minister in December 1980. Since 1977 he held the position of Director of the Department of Political Studies and Programming at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Mr. Wiejacz is a career diplomat.

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with a wide experience in the foreign service. He served in Turkey, Iran, Norway and, as a minister plenipotentiary, in the United States of America. He also participated in the preparations for the Helsinki Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe and at the CSCE meeting in Belgrade.

Mr. Wiejacz was also a member of his country's delegation to many sessions of the General Assembly of the United Nations. He is the author of many articles on different aspects of international relations and a member of the Scientific Council of the Polish Institute of International Affairs.

He is listed to speak today and it will be my pleasure to give him the floor as second speaker.

The Secretariat is circulating today, at my request, the informal paper containing the time-table for meetings to be held by the Committee and its subsidiary bodies during the week 6 to 10 April. The informal paper follows the programme of activities of previous weeks, with the exception of an additional meeting for the Ad Hoc Working Group on Radiological Weapons which will be held next Monday at 10.30 a.m. You will recall that, at our 118th plenary meeting, the Committee decided to allocate that meeting to the Ad Hoc Working Group on Radiological Weapons, bearing in mind that on 17 and 20 April the Palais des Nations will be closed.

If there are no objections, I will consider that the Committee agrees with the time-table.

It was so decided.

The CHAIRMAN: In this connection, may I note that no meetings of the Committee or its working groups will be held between the afternoon of 16 April and the plenary meeting scheduled for 21 April. In view of the reallocation of meetings for the ad hoc working groups on radiological weapons and the comprehensive programme of disarmament decided at our 118th plenary meeting, no meetings of working groups will be lost. ~~Since~~ no plenary meetings are regularly scheduled for Fridays and ~~Mondays~~, there is no need to cancel any plenary meeting.

I would like now to make the following statement:

In continuation of its informal meetings devoted to the substantial examination of concrete issues relating to items 1 and 2 of its agenda, the Committee on Disarmament will, on Monday, 6 April 1981, hold an informal meeting devoted to item 1 (nuclear test ban), taking into account paragraph 51 of the Final Document of the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, in particular the Assembly's recommendation that the trilateral negotiations should be concluded urgently and the result submitted for full consideration by the multilateral negotiating body with a view to the submission of a draft treaty to the General Assembly at the earliest possible date.

Mr. WALKER (Australia): It is the courteous tradition of the Committee on Disarmament for each delegate when he first takes the floor in each month to welcome to the chair the delegate who has been brought there by the march of the alphabet and our monthly rotation of the chairmanship of our Committee. This is the first plenary meeting over which you are presiding as our Chairman for April and I am the first speaker. Therefore the Committee knows that I am under an obligation to congratulate

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you on your assumption of the chair. You may be assured, Mr. Chairman, that I do so with the greatest of sincerity because of the high regard which my delegation has developed over the years for your personal qualities and the distinctive contribution which you personally have brought to the work of the Committee with your unfailing energy and enthusiasm. We are also very conscious of the constructive approach to disarmament taken by the Government of the Federal Republic of Germany. It is also my pleasant duty to compliment the outgoing Chairman, the distinguished Ambassador for the German Democratic Republic, on his conduct of our work during March. Here also I discharge my duty with great sincerity.

We are now in the final month of the spring session and it is clear that the momentum in the Committee has picked up. During the middle of March, in what may come to be seen as something of a turning point, there was a clear shift towards substance and away from procedure. All four working groups appear now to have resolved problems related to their methods of operation and are focusing on specific work, in some cases including drafting. Even items 1 and 2 of the agenda have found a temporary vehicle to move consideration of the issues further. All of this is of satisfaction to my delegation.

Today I want to speak on agenda item 4, chemical weapons, and here we have a clear example of where the Committee has got down to work. The Ad Hoc Working Group on Chemical Weapons has always had in clear view the objective of an eventual convention banning this major category of weapons and it has had, in Ambassador Okawa last year and Ambassador Lidgard this year, extremely effective Chairmen. Furthermore, the Committee in its work on CW has on two occasions made special arrangements to enable the expertise available to many delegations to bridge the otherwise insurmountable gap between the will to negotiate and the highly complex issues to be included in a convention. It is not enough to have the will to negotiate towards a convention: the issues are complex and we need the technical means to address them if we are to have a convention that will satisfy the concerns of all States.

My delegation was associated last year with an experiment to have experts present in informal meetings of the Committee: this was educative and very useful. This year with the Netherlands, and with advice from others, notably India, we did something similarly inspired but different in form: we have sought to have experts present in delegations during the period of concentration of work on chemical weapons. This period of concentration is now drawing to a close but I am sure all those who have participated in it will agree that it has been of particular value. The Working Group discussions have become a technical dialogue in which delegations without experts present have also contributed, generally by interrogation, as constructively as those whose experts have taken the front seat. Again, my delegation finds this most encouraging.

The paradox in our efforts for a chemical weapons convention is that although, on the one hand, one could say that the hard part has already been covered -- the most difficult general obstacles have been surmounted -- on the other hand, the hard, specific part lies ahead. The general obstacles in disarmament are usually political will, military and security considerations, and the legal framework. I would like to focus on these for a moment.

There is a political consensus that we need a chemical weapons convention: this first pre-condition is the most important one for our negotiations. Every delegation that has spoken on this item in this Committee has expressed the desire for a negotiated ban on chemical weapons. A second necessary pre-condition is the



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extent to which the political desire to ban these weapons can be reconciled with the requirements of national security, including military requirements: here again there appears to be a community of views. In many ways the situation is more favourable than at any time since chemical weapons were first used on a large scale, 65 years ago. Very few countries today possess chemical weapons and, relatively, as compared with other categories of weapons, there has been very little refinement and modernization of CW. Although there is agreement that chemical weapons can be most effective militarily, it is also the case that they are mainly effective against the defenceless or in surprise attack and that in all circumstances their use vastly complicates the command and control of military operations by the army which uses them. The practical difficulties of conducting military operations once an exchange of CW attacks has been initiated are such as to daunt any commander. Finally, there is a basis for consensus in the existing legal framework: the 1925 Protocol, the Biological Weapons Convention, work in the CD and its predecessor body and in a great number of United Nations resolutions; there are also the bilateral negotiations reported most recently in CD/112. It would be too much to say that customary international law already comprehensively prohibits the use of chemical weapons: although there are prohibitions, there has not been agreement so far on all circumstances in which the use of CW is outlawed or even as to the chemical agents covered by the ban. The fact that chemical weapons have not been used more than they have probably owes as much to fear of retaliation as it does to international law. There are reports, moreover, that what international custom exists has been flouted in recent years.

Three sizable problems remain, apart from those associated with eventual drafting. They are those of scope, definitions and verification. I wonder whether these problems are truly as formidable as they appear.

If we look at the concerns and broad intentions which underlie the positions delegations have taken on the issue of scope, we can identify significant convergence. Delegations appear divided on how our convention might relate to the 1925 Geneva Protocol, but all would concede that the Protocol has major weaknesses—indeed, were it adequate, we would have no real concern today. It is precisely because the 1925 Protocol covers only some uses of some agents in some circumstances, omits acquisition and possession, and does not provide for either destruction of stocks or even verification of compliance that we now have the task of drawing up something which will effectively and permanently outlaw this form of warfare. My delegation would not contest the assertion that the 1925 Protocol must in no way be prejudiced, but it does not see this as an argument against having provisions relating to use in the convention which we are developing. Many treaties develop and update existing international law. Many new treaties relate to other international agreements whatever their appellation, without doing any damage to the integrity of existing agreements which they partially overlap. The Biological Weapons Convention, to take just one example, specifically relates to the 1925 Protocol. It would not do damage to the 1925 Protocol for us to add to our intended ban on development, production and stockpiling a ban on use. We could specifically note in the new convention that the 1925 Protocol remains in force. There would not thereby be suddenly opened up new ambiguities—on the contrary, ambiguity would end: any CW use would clearly fall into the new comprehensive convention and for States parties to the Protocol but not the new convention, it might be covered by the Protocol. The ambiguity about customary international law, for example, would be resolved once and for all.

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I do not intend to say much about definitions themselves, although I will in a moment have a suggestion on how we might agree on them. It is clear that we cannot have a treaty until we have defined our terms, and equally clear that this task is initially one for the experts. The problem is a very technical and complex one, but one that is capable of solution.

Verification is clearly the greatest outstanding problem over this convention. But even here the differences may not be as serious as they at first appear. For Australia, verification is of cardinal importance. In developing a CW convention we are, in effect, asking some countries to divest themselves of a category of weapons which they currently have, and we are asking the other countries to deny themselves the possibility of acquiring these weapons. My delegation believes we can realistically expect each nation to accede to this proposal only if it can be made confident that others will also respect the requirements of the future convention. My delegation sees verification measures as central to achieving this confidence.

The verification issue has been the subject of intensive discussion in the Working Group, notably yesterday afternoon, and the distinguished Ambassador of the Soviet Union devoted an important intervention to it at our last plenary meeting. There were many statements in that address with which my delegation agrees. We were glad to hear restated, for example, that the Soviet Union stands for strict and effective international control. We share the view expressed by the distinguished Soviet delegate that verification should not be carried to absurd lengths, that there is no need, in his words, to "fill enterprises with hundreds and thousands of foreign inspectors", no call for superfluous interference in peaceful activities, or for the disclosure of commercial and technical secrets. There may be differences as to the interpretations our two delegations might put on these general statements and the concrete consequences that we would see flowing from them. After all, there are major differences between our two societies -- notably as to the dissemination of information. But we must aim to devise concrete measures of verification that will inspire the necessary level of confidence on the part of all countries; and at the same time avoid the potential problems to which the distinguished Soviet delegate referred. This is the balance that must be achieved.

There were also several points in that statement on which I cannot join the distinguished Soviet delegate. He warned, for example, against "verification without disarmament". But is that really such an aberration? We, alas, do not have nuclear disarmament, but we benefit from the confidence generated by IAEA safeguards on civil nuclear industries. Under a CW convention, Australia and other countries which do not have CW will not actually disarm, but they will be subject to verification. Ambassador Issraelyan warned against "the principle of distrust". We deplore the mistrust which unfortunately exists between nations, and the causes of that mistrust. We think good verification measures in agreements such as the CW convention are one way of reducing that mistrust.

There are other points on which my delegation does not agree with that of the Soviet Union; but we are not here to try to pick holes in each other's arguments. Let me return instead to welcoming the Soviet reiteration of its acknowledgement, with the United States, in CD/112, that there must be adequate verification, based on a combination of national and international measures. My delegation is encouraged by

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this convergence of views. We are well aware of the wide range of possibilities that exist for verification and of the excellent work done in this field by, for example, Finland and Canada. The essential question is: how much verification is enough? In the view of my delegation the answer must be, enough to deter infractions, enough to satisfy the international community that the Treaty is being observed faithfully and enough to clear up definitively false reports of violations-- over-all, enough to generate the confidence that must exist if nations are to be expected to adhere to the convention. We believe this can be achieved without giving rise to the problems described by the distinguished representative of the Soviet Union.

I said at the outset that we had the paradox of a large measure of agreement and yet much that is difficult still lying ahead. Although I have tried to show that these difficulties may not be as great as they seem, I recognize that they may yet frustrate us. For instance, it is not possible to solve the remaining technical problems in isolation from the more "political" problems or the drafting problems: quite simply, each of the latter groups of problems will throw up technical issues requiring particular solutions. How can we proceed, given the possibility of frustration difficulties in our road and the certainty of time passing rapidly before our next over-all disarmament review at the special session of the General Assembly next year? I have two suggestions, two alternatives, to place before the Committee for its consideration.

The first is that we proceed step by step. We have, or will have by the end of this spring session, covered all the basic elements of a convention and the associated problems. How do we proceed from this position towards actual drafting? Rather than an article by article approach, which will constantly force us to leave issues open until agreement is reached on later articles, we might seek to tackle major groups of issues, and exhaust each in turn. Clearly, scope is one such group, and definitions and verification are others. Even if we take all summer to resolve the question of scope, it would in fact be a major achievement to get that far.

The second alternative, and it may be preferable, is to divide our task into two: one general and one on detailed technical issues. We may be able to take advantage of the very large measure of consensus on what we are aiming for that I have already mentioned and, relatively quickly, draw up the basic general framework of a chemical weapons convention covering the political engagements it would embody, including provisions for verification. There are several models for this, and again we can note the Biological Weapons Convention. The second facet of the convention would, on this scheme, take the form of technical protocols covering, for example, definitions (including toxicity criteria) and the technical specifications of verification devices. We do not envisage that the main body of the convention be drafted without regard to the technical considerations but that the technical specifics of these matters mentioned above be spelt out in the protocols. Obviously, agreement on the main body of the convention would be contingent on agreement being reached on these technical issues. This dual approach also has a number of models, both bilateral and multilateral.

Let me make clear that my delegation is not pressing for one or other of those particular work methods. Our central concern is that the momentum which has been built up over the years towards a CW convention and especially the present momentum in the CD be sustained.

The CHAIRMAN: I thank the distinguished representative of Australia, Ambassador Walker, for his statement and for the kind words he addressed to the chair.

Mr. WIEJACZ (Poland): First of all, let me thank you, Mr. Chairman, for your kind words of welcome.

It is a great pleasure and a privilege for me to be able to address the Committee on Disarmament, a prestigious and important disarmament negotiating forum where all the nuclear-weapon Powers together with non-nuclear-weapon States pursue their common, vitally important objectives.

First, however, I should like to take this opportunity to express to you, Sir, our congratulations and good wishes on your assumption of the important and demanding office of Chairman for the month of April. May I also be allowed to address to your predecessor, the distinguished representative of the German Democratic Republic, our appreciation for the able and wise leadership which he gave the Committee last month. In fact, much credit for the constructive atmosphere prevailing at the current session of the Committee is also due to the distinguished representative of France who was in the chair in February.

It is, indeed, satisfying to know that the Committee on Disarmament -- a commendable exception -- has been able to pursue its goals at this session with a sense of purpose and dedication, despite the fact that the international climate beyond this conference room has not been altogether propitious or conducive to meaningful progress in the field of arms limitation and disarmament.

Public opinion in my country, Poland, and I presume in many other countries in Europe and elsewhere is now increasingly and understandably concerned over the growing threat to peace and international security, posed not only by the freeze on the SALT process but also by the upward swing of the spiral of the nuclear arms race. People everywhere are rightly alarmed at the staggering human and material cost of that race -- the global daily expenditure of well over one billion dollars. This vast sum spent on the implements of war means that urgently needed funds are being denied to meet the pressing requirements of the socio-economic development of States.

As we in Poland see it, the international situation is aggravated by the distinct tendency to supplant by a policy of confrontation and distrust that of co-operation and détente, a tendency which is at odds with the spirit and specific stipulations of the Helsinki document. It will not be far-fetched to observe in this connection that the true source of the spreading malaise lies in the repudiation of the principles of military parity and equal security in favour of strategic superiority and attempts to act from a position of strength.

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In the considered view of Poland — and I am sure I can speak also for other socialist countries — what the world needs most at this point in time is neither superiority nor even a balance of nuclear terror. What we need is a balance of reason and a balance of security at the lowest possible level of military force. In a word, we badly need to sustain détente and to promote it also in the military sphere. This is particularly true of central Europe, the part of the globe which has the sad distinction of having the highest concentration of nuclear hardware, the largest arsenals of the most sophisticated and destructive weapons man has ever known.

The decision to deploy in a number of West European countries a new generation of middle-range nuclear missile weapons and the recurrent suggestions that they should be perhaps reinforced with neutron weapons is a wrong remedy. Indeed, they set a trend which unless checked and reversed can well ruin the positive accomplishments of détente and co-operation which proved so beneficial to millions of Europeans and to their countries. We therefore firmly believe that such a development must be resolutely opposed and prevented at all cost.

It was precisely to this end that Leonid Brezhnev, the General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, in his report to the recent 26th Congress of the Party, formulated an impressive set of new, significant proposals for negotiation. We believe that these imaginative initiatives, especially in respect of strategic arms limitation, nuclear missile weapons in Europe, neutron weapons and confidence building measures in Europe and elsewhere — to mention just a few — open up new vistas for a vitally important and constructive disarmament dialogue. Poland accords them its full support. We would wish to see them taken up and considered urgently with all due attention.

In the firm view of my Government, the checking of the nuclear arms race and averting military confrontation, especially in Europe, is at this time the supreme task in our common struggle for peace in Europe and throughout the world. Seeking to contribute to political and military détente in Europe, my Government has declared its readiness to host in Warsaw a conference on military détente and disarmament in Europe. We believe that a decision in this regard will be taken shortly at the Madrid meeting of the States which took part in the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe.

Apart from seeking such a conference, Poland is invariably interested in and dedicated to early progress in the Vienna talks on the mutual reduction of armed forces and armaments in central Europe.

Meaningful arms limitation and disarmament have always been priority objectives of Poland's foreign policy. At this particular time in history, we attach to it even greater significance. For never before has the threat of a nuclear conflict been so real; never before was so much at stake for so many. We therefore badly need to muster all possible imagination and courage in facing the difficulties ahead. The sense of responsibility for our common heritage and for the future generations should be compelling enough to induce Governments to explore and resolve their differences at the conference table, not out there in the field.

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Public opinion in Poland deems it imperative to utilize all negotiating possibilities open through bilateral channels. We likewise believe it necessary to expand and intensify the ongoing disarmament negotiating process, or open new avenues where useful dialogue is desirable and possible. It is our firm view that in disarmament negotiations no stone must be left unturned.

Meaningful disarmament efforts, whether bilateral, regional or global, are essential for the preservation of peace, for sustained détente, for co-operation between nations. Indeed, they are indispensable if we are to face and succeed in resolving the complex and difficult problems of the material and spiritual development of both individuals and societies.

With your indulgence, Mr. Chairman, I should like to turn now to some more specific topics on which I would like to comment in my statement today. I propose to deal briefly with the question of the cessation of the nuclear arms race and nuclear disarmament and the question of chemical weapons, the latter being the topic which, in accordance with the Committee's programme of work, is currently the focus of its attention. As is well known, it is an issue of long-standing and traditional interest to Poland. Finally, I would also have an observation or two on the question of the comprehensive programme of disarmament.

We all recognize that, as it was stressed by the General Assembly in the Final Document of its first special session devoted to disarmament: "Nuclear weapons pose the greatest danger to mankind and to the survival of civilization. It is essential to halt and reverse the nuclear arms race in all its aspects in order to avert the danger of war involving nuclear weapons. The ultimate goal in this context is the complete elimination of nuclear weapons."

The above statement from the consensus Final Document leaves no doubt in anybody's mind that here we are dealing with a subject which rightly has pride of place among all disarmament priorities. As indicated by the General Assembly in its most recent resolutions 35/152 B and C, the top priority status of nuclear disarmament has again been confirmed by the Members of the United Nations. There can be no excuse whatsoever for further delaying resolute, mutual negotiations in that regard, if only because it would inevitably postpone effective counteraction to the continued, unchecked development and sophistication of the most devastating weapons that exist today. Certainly, it is a long and arduous way which leads to that objective. The negotiations on the cessation of the nuclear arms race and nuclear disarmament are bound to be complex, protracted and perhaps frustrating. But we must embark on the negotiating process in the conviction that the longest march has to begin with the first step. Let us take that step here and now, as has been proposed by the socialist countries in their numerous working documents, notably CD/4, CD/109 and the most recent one -- CD/162.

While, regrettably, no consensus has so far proved possible concerning the establishment of a special ad hoc working group or groups, the Polish delegation welcomes with satisfaction the compromise working arrangement whereby the examination of the prerequisites for negotiations on nuclear disarmament and related matters would be taken up at regular, informal meetings of the Committee.

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We believe that such meetings would also provide a suitable framework for informal consultations, with the active participation of all the nuclear-weapon Powers, with a view to preparing for constructive, multilateral negotiations on the complete and general prohibition of nuclear-weapon tests and the conclusion of an international legal instrument in that respect.

With all the nuclear-weapon Powers present around this conference table, the Committee can neither afford nor justify its failure to act on nuclear disarmament, especially in view of the fact that the current session is the last full working period the Committee has before it reports to the second special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament.

As I indicated just a moment ago, the question of the total and effective elimination of chemical weapons has been an issue of traditional and active interest to Poland for quite some time. I am sure that the records of the Committee on Disarmament and the United Nations will amply bear out the contribution which the delegation of Poland -- alongside those of socialist and many other countries -- has been making to the efforts of the international community to outlaw this and, indeed, all other categories of weapons of mass annihilation.

Let me observe that, apart from the intrinsic merit of an early agreement on the total prohibition of chemical weapons, one compelling consideration motivating my country in that regard has been the concern that further delay in the proscription of chemical weapons could not only add to the existing stocks of these weapons but also work to encourage a technological race in CW laboratories. As we can guess, research and development programmes would not be limited only to perfecting binary weapons; they might also succeed in adding new and still more abhorrent items to the inventory of chemical warfare agents.

After years of sustained and often frustrating efforts in the field of CW negotiations, an important and promising break-through was made by the Committee in 1980. The establishment of the special Ad Hoc Working Group -- while procedural in nature -- marked also an important substantive departure point. By making it possible for the Committee to turn from general considerations to a more specific, pragmatic and constructive examination of concrete issues, it allowed the Committee to live up to its designation as the single multilateral negotiating organ in the field of disarmament. Owing to the skilful and dedicated leadership of its first Chairman, Ambassador Okawa of Japan, and the current Chairman, Ambassador Lidgard of Sweden, the Working Group has been able to undertake and continue productive work. In keeping with its mandate, this work consisted in the identification and constructive examination of problems which could be dealt with in a negotiating process that, one day, would ultimately lead to the elaboration of a multilateral treaty on the prohibition of all chemical weapons.

In the view of my delegation, the multilateral effort proved successful largely because it did not seek to disregard but, on the contrary, to co-operate with and benefit from the simultaneous bilateral negotiations pursued in Geneva by the Soviet Union and the United States. Constituting part and parcel of the

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same endeavour to ban chemical weapons, the bilateral and multilateral process enjoyed a mutually stimulating feedback relationship. My delegation hopes that these vitally important bilateral negotiations in the field of chemical weapons will be resumed in Geneva at an early date.

The net effect of the new approach to the question of chemical weapons has been a clearer picture of the areas of convergence and divergence of views on the major issues of a future CW treaty or convention. My delegation and, I am sure, many other delegations in this conference room are gratified at the remarkable extent of agreement and convergence of opinions. As the Polish delegation sees it, the crucial question which should be answered at this time is what ought to be the most appropriate and promising procedure to follow next -- in the days and months ahead. In our opinion, it would be most appropriate and worth while to continue the in-depth examination of issues and areas on which views converge. With total clarity and understanding of these problems, the Committee would be better equipped and prepared to cope with the outstanding questions on which views still seem to differ. In our considered view, an opposite approach would neither facilitate nor accelerate our work but, on the contrary, it could play up the differences, thus holding back final agreement.

Since this is one of the series of meetings which the Committee's programme of work assigned to the consideration of chemical weapons, I believe it will not be inappropriate for me to state again briefly some of the key principles which have so far -- and will in the future -- guide the Polish delegation with respect to the prohibition of chemical weapons.

First, we must continue to uphold and foster the identity of purpose between the multilateral and bilateral negotiating effort, in a spirit of co-operation and not one of rivalry.

Secondly, the scope of the future CW convention must provide for the prohibition of the development, production and stockpiling as well as the destruction of existing stocks of chemical weapons. On the other hand, as far as the question of the use of chemical weapons is concerned, Poland firmly believes that it has been successfully and effectively solved in the Geneva Protocol of 1925. The issue of the prohibition of use should not be reopened, therefore, in any way in the future convention. We do not subscribe to the view that the introduction into the body of the Protocol of a verification formula would appreciably strengthen that instrument which represents one of the oldest and working arms limitation agreements. If anything, the likely result would be its considerable weakening for, naturally enough, many of the Protocol's present signatories would hesitate or take their time in its ratification.

Thirdly, the verification provisions must be effective and must adequately correspond to the scope of the prohibition. Among other things, they must take due account of the principle of the sovereignty and equality of parties and provide for the protection of industrial secrets in the peaceful chemical industries.

In turning to the last part of my statement -- the question of the comprehensive programme of disarmament -- I should like first of all to echo the satisfaction already voiced by other delegations at the fact that the Ad Hoc Working Group



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has been able -- under the skilful leadership of the distinguished representative of Mexico, Ambassador García Robles -- to proceed to substantive negotiations. No doubt, this was rendered possible by the progress made by the Group last year when its work continued under the guidance of Ambassador Adeniji of Nigeria.

We share the views of those who argue that it would not be necessary for the programme to take the juridical form of a treaty or a convention or provide for definite, unrealistically short stages or target dates. At the same time, we are of the opinion that a practical and realistic programme should, inter alia, embody certain rules and principles which should be followed and observed in the process of disarmament negotiations. These include the principles of the undiminished security of all parties, the sovereign equality of States and a balance of rights and obligations.

Such a programme must, above all, clearly and distinctly convey the idea that in the nuclear age there is just no rational alternative to disarmament and to the peaceful coexistence of States. It should, accordingly, provide for mechanisms which would work to assure the peaceful coexistence of societies and individuals as well. This, in fact, should be the starting-point. The international community, individual Governments, parliaments and non-governmental organizations should co-operate to convince and persuade their societies that a disarmed and peaceful world will become a reality only if and when all individuals are willing and determined to make it happen.

The education of the younger generation so that it can appreciate the value of peace, understand the misery of war, and make the world better prepared for effective disarmament, was one of the essential considerations underlying the United Nations Declaration on the Preparation of Societies for Life in Peace, a document which -- as it will be recalled -- was adopted upon the initiative of my country. We believe, accordingly, that a comprehensive programme of disarmament must provide, in addition to the various specific measures and priorities, for a procedure and a mechanism translating the principles of the Declaration into practical disarmament-oriented actions which would ultimately render disarmament efforts easier, more effective and more appreciated everywhere.

In our preliminary view, such a procedure could envisage a broad-based campaign, perhaps under the auspices of the United Nations Secretariat, for instance, the Centre for Disarmament and the Office of Public Information, whereby educators, creative professions and conceivably media everywhere would publicize the ideals of peace and co-operation of nations while, at the same time, familiarizing public opinion in the world at large with the objectives, difficulties and rewards of a world where human and material resources are not diverted to wasteful military purposes but meet the daily needs of every human being.

Some of these considerations may, perhaps, be developed further in a working paper, if the Polish delegation deems it desirable and possible at some later date.

The CHAIRMAN: I thank the distinguished representative of Poland, His Excellency the Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr. Józef Wiejacz. I thank him also for the kind words he addressed to the chair.

Mr. FEIN (Netherlands): Mr. Chairman, I consider it a privilege to take the floor in this first formal meeting under your chairmanship. The Netherlands delegation wishes to congratulate you on this occasion and to assure you of our fullest co-operation. Having had the privilege of working closely with you over the past three years, here in this Committee and in New York, I know your exceptional qualities as a negotiator and I also know your dedication to the course of disarmament, truly reflecting the policy of your Government, as well as mine. I wish you all success.

I also should like to thank Ambassador Herder, the distinguished representative of the German Democratic Republic, for his valuable efforts as our Chairman during the past month. Under his guidance the Committee made further progress towards our common goal.

Today I wish to make a statement on behalf of my Government concerning some aspects of a chemical weapons convention. I do so in the hope that this may be a modest contribution to our joint efforts to develop a multilateral CW convention. But we of course all realize that much depends on the outcome of the bilateral negotiations between the United States of America and the Soviet Union. We earnestly hope that these bilateral negotiations will be resumed in the near future.

May I recall that in the late 1960s it was a courageous political decision at the highest level, in the United States, that opened the road to a breakthrough with regard to the biological weapons Convention. Some years later, in 1974, the President of the United States and the President of the Soviet Union signed a joint communique in Moscow in which both sides reaffirmed their interest in an effective international agreement which would exclude from the arsenals of States such dangerous instruments of mass destruction as chemical weapons. Desiring to contribute to early progress in this direction, (I am quoting more or less from the communique) the United States and the Soviet Union agreed to consider a joint initiative in the Committee on Disarmament with respect to the conclusion of an international convention dealing with chemical warfare.

It is our sincere hope that the same political courage and the same political wisdom will soon again prevail and lead to our common goal, a CW convention.

Let me now outline for you what would be, in our view, a reasonable, practical approach to a total ban on chemical weapons, for all time.

First and foremost the Protocol of Geneva of 1925 prohibiting the use in war of chemical and biological weapons should be universally adhered to and, if feasible, strengthened in order to preclude any possibility of chemical warfare. This implies that we have to renounce the option of retaliating in kind if a State is attacked with chemical weapons. As we all know, many countries made reservations to keep this option open when ratifying the Protocol. In any case, it is essential that a link be established between the Geneva Protocol and the new chemical weapons convention.

Secondly negotiations should be started on a clearly-worded convention to prohibit the development, production, stockpiling, acquisition, transfer and retention of chemicals and dispersion devices with the intention of using them in

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chemical warfare activities. This convention should have a general purpose criterion as its basis. A great many building blocks have become available during the last two years and especially during the last two weeks. And here a word of sincere gratitude to the CW experts who have assisted us in the last two weeks, is called for. Their presence here has helped us to clarify several aspects, and inspired us to renewed efforts. We are grateful to them. Many of the definitions mentioned in document CD/112 of 7 July 1980 can be used for the convention, as is the case with other definitions proposed by several delegations in the last few weeks. The convention should specify that, once it has entered into force, parties should declare their stockpiles, their means or facilities for production and their plans and procedures for stockpile destruction and for the dismantling of their production facilities.

Thirdly, there will be a need for a reasonable system of verification. Although national verification agencies can play an important role as clearing-houses for information, national means of verification cannot cover all aspects of the convention. Some kind of international verification machinery will have to be established, the core of which would be a small permanent secretariat that can rely on the co-operation of a great number of scientific and technical experts in all parts of the world. Two important activities that call for international verification are: the destruction of stockpiles of existing chemical weapons and the confirmation that CW production facilities have in fact been closed down and eventually dismantled. Further discussion is necessary on how to verify that in the presumably peaceful chemical industry no chemical weapons agents are being produced, in particular the most dangerous single purpose agents.

A moment ago I used the words "reasonable verification". That brings to mind the same words used by the distinguished representative of the Soviet Union a few days ago. He also stressed that verification should not become an objective in itself, that it should be closely related to the scope of a convention. I wholeheartedly agree. But verification -- "reasonable" verification -- is just one component of the system which I am putting forward to you today. We have to be careful with that word "reasonable". It should not be used to imply a lack of importance of this component. A chain is only as strong as its weakest link and therefore we should aim for such "reasonable" verification that it is of the same strength and importance as the other links, namely, the convention and the state of protection against the results of chemical attacks. And such a strong link would have to include, as I stated earlier, some on-site inspections.

In any case, the convention should provide for a system allowing for inspections on challenge. The basis for a request for such an inspection could vary quite significantly. It could be for example, that a chemical analysis of river water indicated residues of nerve agents (cf. the Netherlands working paper CCD/533 of 22 April 1977 concerning the verification of the presence of nerve agents, their decomposition products or starting materials downstream of chemical production plants). Or, and this is another example, there could be indications that large amounts of phosphorus have disappeared from the peaceful chemical industry. Other contingencies to be taken care of are, for instance, a finding

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of some chemical munitions indications, that chemical weapons were used somewhere, etc. A flexible system seems necessary, allowing for consultations between parties as well as, wherever relevant, international inspections. Such verification activities would often require sensitive and specific analyses, which would have to be as non-intrusive as possible. States should be encouraged to carry out research efforts in this direction.

There have been quite some exchanges of views in this Committee on the question of whether the use of CW would have to be prohibited in the convention or not. Whatever the outcome of this somewhat academic discussion, it need not be argued that the use of CW would provide strong evidence that a party had not fulfilled its obligations under the CW convention. Such a finding could therefore form the basis for an inspection in accordance with procedures that will need further discussion in this Committee.

I now come to my fourth observation. The level of protection against the effects of chemical warfare should be kept at or be brought up to an adequate level. Only under such circumstances would a reasonable amount of verification free from unacceptable intrusiveness be sufficient. Therefore the production of reasonable small amounts of chemical warfare agents has to be allowed with adequate notification to the international verification agency. The results of research and development in these protective areas could be made available to other States and the international verification agency could provide an inventory of available equipment and of research efforts, thus laying the foundation for a whole set of confidence-building measures.

Last year I stated in this Committee that we should not overreach ourselves when dealing with each of the separate elements of the convention. I still think that this should be kept in mind. I should therefore like to repeat what I said last year in this respect.

I said I would like to make the following proposition for your consideration. As the end result of our work -- not this year, but at some time in the not too distant future -- we should achieve the following three results:

1. A good definition of scope;
2. A reasonable system of verification methods;
3. An adequate system of protection measures.

If this could be achieved, then we have the foundation for a CW convention that should be attractive to all nations. The advantages of such a convention, together with the auxiliary measures I mentioned, would outweigh all the tremendous disadvantages and risks involved in maintaining a chemical warfare capability for retaliation purposes. If this proposition is accepted, then the road to a CW convention might not be all that difficult.

But we should not overreach ourselves when dealing with each of the separate elements. We should not become "prisoners of perfection". And then I said last year -- just as I did at the beginning of this statement I am making now -- that there was a need for courageous political decisions at the highest level, as was the case with the biological weapons Convention.

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It has been said that the present circumstances and the international climate of today are not conducive to disarmament measures.

I disagree. In this respect I would also endorse what was said the other day by Ambassador Adeniji, the distinguished representative of Nigeria, that this is a two-way street. If circumstances influence the CD, the CD can also -- at least to a certain degree -- influence circumstances. Let us do away with chemical weapons as soon as we can.

The CHAIRMAN: I thank the distinguished representative of the Netherlands, Ambassador Fein, for his statement. I thank him also very much for the kind words he addressed to the Chair.

Mr. VRHUNEC (Yugoslavia): Mr. Chairman, permit me, on behalf of the Yugoslav delegation, to extend to you the most sincere congratulations for your taking up of the duties of Chairman of the Committee for the month of April. For our part, we would like to say that you can count on our full co-operation. At the same time, I would also like to congratulate the Ambassador of the German Democratic Republic for an exceptionally well done job during the month of March when the Committee undoubtedly made a definite step forward.

At the very beginning of my statement on item 4 of the agenda, concerning the banning of chemical weapons, I would like to point out that the Yugoslav delegation has presented its positive position of principle with regard to the elaboration of an international convention on chemical weapons on repeated occasions, not only in the Committee but on other occasions as well. I would like to take this opportunity to emphasize that Yugoslavia strives for the adoption of an international instrument that will ban completely and effectively the development, production, stockpiling, acquisition, transfer, use and other activities associated with chemical weapons.

The activity carried out thus far in the Committee with regard to this question indicates how urgent this problem is owing to the existence of a permanent danger of the use of these weapons if a ban is not agreed on very quickly.

I think that the work of the Committee on this issue should be accelerated and, while not wishing to enter into a detailed and complete establishment of priority problems, we propose that the consideration of this matter be divided into three groups of problems.

The first group must include problems which, in our opinion, should not be the subject of discussion within the Working Group any more since they were analysed in detail at formal and informal meetings in past years and clear formulations for them already exist. We consider that agreement in principle exists with regard to these formulations from a professional standpoint, and with the necessary stylistic and technical amendments they could become part of the convention. They are those, for example, covering the following issues:

- (a) Prohibition on the basis of general purpose criteria;
- (b) Toxicity criteria;
- (c) Categories of chemical weapons on the basis of general purpose and toxicity criteria;

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- (d) Prohibition of the transfer of chemical weapons or any kind of activity related to the proliferation of chemical weapons;
- (e) Necessary time of destruction of chemical weapons and facilities (or dismantling);
- (f) Creation of a consultative committee;
- (g) Exchange of (request for) information directly or through the consultative committee;
- (h) Sovereign rights in acceptance or non-acceptance of on-site inspection.

The second group of problems is comprised of those problems with respect to which political, scientific and professional disagreement in principle does not exist but for which there do not exist formulations that would substantively and terminologically be acceptable. These issues are, for instance:

- (a) Definition of chemical warfare agents and chemical weapons;
- (b) National verification and relationship with consultative committee;
- (c) "Time-table" of the prohibition (general prohibition) based on a "step-by-step" approach;
- (d) Exchange of information after the convention has entered into force;
- (e) "List of toxic chemicals" -- addendum to the Convention (for chemical warfare agents, intermediates, binary components, etc.);
- (f) Functions of the consultative committee -- rights and obligations;
- (g) Additional criteria for new synthetic compounds and toxins;
- (h) Declaration of accidents;
- (i) Delimitation criteria (except toxicity).

It seems to us that especially the existing proposals for the definition of chemical warfare agents contain many common elements which could make possible the elaboration of a working text on which consensus could be reached. However, it is our opinion that it should also be decided whether the definition should be accompanied by an enumeration of certain elements such as intention of use, quantity, manner of utilization, direct or indirect toxic effects, immediate or delayed toxic action, etc. It may also be asked whether this definition should also encompass those weapons where the toxic effect is of a secondary nature.

The next question that can be asked concerns the problem of national verification. Should national verification be given a general framework at all,

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or should it be left to each country individually? Should standard verification methods be prescribed? How can the underdeveloped countries be enabled to exercise national control?

The third group of questions is composed of problems which have not even tentatively been agreed upon and with respect to which there still exist substantive differences of approach regarding the manner in which they should be settled. These questions include, for example:

- (a) International verification;
- (b) Destruction;
- (c) Declaration of existing stocks and facilities;
- (d) Conditions for the entry of the convention into force, etc.

I would like to stress that my country also attaches particular importance to the problems of technical and medical protection with regard to chemical weapons, with the aim of decreasing the risks of the possible use of these weapons. This is why we cannot accept those positions which suggest the prohibition of activities concerning protection. And all the more so, in view of the fact that it has been predicted that the process of destruction of chemical weapons under the future convention will last about ten years.

We would like to stress that this division of ours into groups of problems should not be considered definite because logically, after an appropriate process of negotiations, a regrouping and a different categorization of certain problems may be necessary. In making this suggestion and with the aim of achieving maximum efficiency in our work, we merely wish to present that one of the possible methodologies for the work of the Working Group and, thus, for the work of the Committee as well, which appears the most appropriate to us at this moment.

This is why, in the opinion of my delegation, the work of the Working Group on Chemical Weapons has reached a level where we must begin to think very intensively about the co-ordination of the degree of results that have been achieved in its work with the contents of the mandate of the Working Group. We think that the existing mandate has been exhausted and that, in order to achieve a continued intensive progress in the harmonization of positions concerning particular parts of the future convention, we must urgently take measures to establish a corresponding new mandate. This would make possible the unhindered development of substantive negotiations aimed at reaching an agreement on the convention as soon as possible.

In conclusion, I wish to express our admiration to Ambassador Lidgard for his excellent chairmanship of the Working Group, as well as to Ambassador Okawa for his excellent work done last year.

The CHAIRMAN: I thank the distinguished representative of Yugoslavia, Ambassador Vrhunec, for his statement and for the kind words he has addressed to the Chair.

Mr. de la GORCE (France) (translated from French): Mr. Chairman, allow me, on behalf of my delegation and personally, to congratulate you and to offer you our best wishes for your period of office. All our colleagues know and appreciate your great abilities. We know that under your guidance the Committee on Disarmament will make all the progress in its work that is possible.

I should like to say also that the French delegation is particularly pleased to see in the chair the representative of a country with which France has particularly close, friendly and co-operative relations.

I should like also to express once more to our colleague from the German Democratic Republic, Ambassador Herder, my delegation's congratulations and thanks for the efficiency and courtesy with which he conducted our work in March.

My delegation would like today to present its views on the state of our work on chemical weapons, and also briefly to recall its position on the question of nuclear disarmament, in connection with the discussions we are holding on this subject at informal meetings.

My Government attaches considerable importance to the question of chemical disarmament. Chemical weapons are a real menace, both because of their lethal power and because it is relatively easy to manufacture and use them.

It was for that reason that my delegation, at our first session, urged that the Committee should initiate negotiations on chemical disarmament and adopt the method which seemed to us the most suitable, namely, the establishment of a working group.

We are pleased to note the progress that has been made by the Working Group on Chemical Weapons and wish to pay tribute to its successive chairmen, Ambassador Okawa and Ambassador Lidgard, for their very efficient guidance of its work. The group has made the best possible use of the opportunities offered it by its mandate, which we would have preferred to be broader and which should undoubtedly be reconsidered when the time comes for the Group to embark on a more advanced stage in the negotiation process.

The latest discussions have brought out the many points of agreement that exist as regards definitions. They have also revealed the divergencies of opinion that remain as regards the scope of the convention and verification.

The first thing to be defined is the scope of the convention, since verification problems depend directly on it.

Some delegations have expressed a desire for the scope to be extended to include a prohibition on the use of chemical weapons, as prescribed in the Geneva Protocol of 1925.



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In our view, it is essential to maintain the necessary distinction between two different areas and between the legal instruments of which they are respectively the subject: on the one hand the rules of warfare, under which comes the prohibition on the use of chemical weapons, which is the subject of the Geneva Protocol, and on the other hand the sphere of disarmament, under which comes the prohibition on the manufacture and possession of such weapons, which is the subject of the convention we are now discussing.

The Geneva Protocol lays down a general prohibition on the use of toxic substances in warfare, a prohibition which is a rule of the law of war.

The prohibition on the manufacture, acquisition or stockpiling of chemical weapons, which is a disarmament measure, can apply only to a limited number of products and equipment which are precisely defined; in the case of other products which, although capable of being used as chemical weapons, are currently and legitimately used in industry or agriculture, it is hardly possible to go beyond declarations by States in the form of statistics. Lastly, as regards the manufacture and stockpiling of innumerable chemical products with a lower level of toxicity, these will continue to escape any restriction.

If we were to include a clause prohibiting use in the convention we are to negotiate, we should inevitably have to choose between two solutions, either to repeat the general prohibition laid down in the Geneva Protocol, which would be pointless, or to adopt a more restricted definition, which it would be difficult to establish and would have the effect of weakening the authority of the Geneva Protocol. In the view of the French Government, which is the depositary of the Protocol, the rule of the law of war embodying a general prohibition on the use of chemical weapons is a valuable achievement which should be preserved intact.

My delegation understands and shares the concerns of those who would like to secure the adoption of provisions for the verification of possible breaches of the Geneva Protocol. We showed our active interest in this matter at the thirty-fifth session of the General Assembly by co-sponsoring the resolution in which the Assembly requested the Secretary-General to verify, with the help of experts, certain allegations relating to possible violations. The French delegation wonders, however, what legal framework would be the most suitable for provisions of a permanent kind. Bearing in mind the distinction referred to above; it is not convinced that the convention we are discussing offers the best solution.

Another proposal has been put forward for the broadening of the scope of the convention to include a prohibition on the possession or acquisition of a "chemical warfare capability". My delegation has serious reservations with regard to that proposal.

The concept of a chemical warfare capability seems to us too difficult to define precisely, and liable to too broad a range of interpretations to be included in a legal text. Interpreted broadly, it might, for instance, be invoked, improperly, to justify criticism of certain activities essential for the maintenance of a capacity for protection against possible attacks with the use of chemical weapons -- a purely passive capacity, I would point out, which my country considers it very important to retain for reasons which our delegation has explained several times over. Furthermore, the concept of chemical warfare capability covers such matters as defence plans, research and the training of personnel, the prohibition of which would be unrealistic because it would be impossible to verify.

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My delegation therefore considers that we should not be too ambitious about the scope of the future convention because it believes that only what can be verified can be prohibited or regulated.

The implementation of a rigorous system of verification of the non-manufacture or non-possession of chemical agents and weapons is likely to raise insoluble problems if it is to be applied to a large number of products. A distinction should therefore be made between super-toxic lethal chemical products and other lethal chemical products; such a distinction could be made on the basis of the definitions proposed in the joint United States-USSR report of 7 July 1980 (CD/112), which would, however, require supplementing as regards the modes of penetration of these products into the body.

As it has already explained in document CD/106 of 27 June 1980, my delegation proposes that only the manufacture of the super-toxic products and their specific precursors should be prohibited. It follows that very strict international control of such products should be contemplated. The other lethal products would be subject to national control, and every State should undertake to furnish, to an international body set up for the purpose, usable statistical data. Explanations could be asked for if excessive stocks were being built up, and international control should be provided for until unjustified stocks were eliminated. As for low-toxicity products such as weedkillers or irritants used for maintaining public order, my delegation feels that these should not be covered by the future convention.

The reason why my delegation wishes so stringently to define the scope of the convention and to restrict the list of prohibited products and of products subject merely to control is that it is anxious that verification of these provisions should be as effective and reliable as possible.

For the reasons explained here last week by the Ambassador of the Federal Republic of Germany, it would not be possible to rely exclusively on the national institutions of each State party to ensure the full implementation of all the provisions of the Convention. There must be international supervision, over and above national supervision, which should be entrusted to a committee set up for the purpose under the convention. Such a committee's duties would include the processing of the statistical data furnished by States parties under the convention. It should be provided with the necessary resources in staff and equipment; it might have access to data furnished by the national technical facilities of States parties, for instance in connection with remote sensing. It might perhaps in due course benefit from the assistance of the international satellite monitoring agency the establishment of which is under consideration. Lastly and more particularly, the committee should be authorized, where it considered it necessary, to have on-the-spot inspections conducted by experts recruited for the purpose, to investigate possible violations.

The purpose of international measures of verification would be to check compliance with two separate aspects of the Convention:

First, the fulfilment of undertakings to destroy stocks and dismantle specific production or munition filling facilities. Such measures would cease as soon as the subject of the action had been eliminated;

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Secondly, the observance of undertakings prohibiting the manufacture and stockpiling of agents of chemical warfare or chemical weapons and stipulating the cessation of all activities connected therewith. These measures would be applied on a continuing basis so long as the convention remained in force.

Verification of the destruction of chemical agents and munitions and of the dismantling of specific production facilities would not be possible without on-the-spot inspection. The risks referred to by some who oppose such inspection (divulgence of the nature of the agents destroyed, violation of manufacturing secrecy if the destruction took place in proximity to industrial plants) seem slight. Most chemical warfare agents are in fact known, and for reasons of safety the installations for destruction would almost always need to be established in isolated areas away from large industrial complexes.

In order that these inspection operations should be effective, it would be desirable for international experts to be authorized to enquire into the destruction process and the plans for destruction facilities. They should then be authorized to observe and check the destruction operations carried out at each facility. No problem of secrecy need be involved, since the destruction facilities would be eliminated when their task was completed. Such verification, which would, by its nature, be temporary, would seem to be the easiest to carry out and the most acceptable.

The standing procedures to be devised for the verification of fulfilment of undertakings not to manufacture or stockpile would be of a different type. Such verification should not normally require the presence of international experts on the spot. It would be based mainly on the analysis by the international committee of the statistical data furnished by the States parties and of any other information which those States might provide. However, where the committee or a State party had any doubt about the behaviour of another State party with respect to the convention, the latter State should either furnish explanations of a kind which the committee deemed satisfactory or accept an on-the-spot inspection.

The insistence of many delegations, including our own, on the need for all parties to accept, where necessary, inspections on their territory, should not be interpreted as a sign of systematic distrust. On the contrary, we consider that the opening of frontiers to international inspection should be regarded by all as a pledge of the mutual trust there should be between the parties to a disarmament convention.

My Government attaches the greatest importance to the questions of the nuclear arms race and nuclear disarmament; it weighs the risks attaching to the existence of such weapons; it understands the legitimate concern felt in that respect within the international community. My delegation therefore welcomes the initiation of an examination of these questions by the Committee at informal meetings. We had already recommended discussions of this kind in the First Committee of the General Assembly.

The basic conditions for disarmament set out in the Final Document adopted by the General Assembly in 1970 apply to nuclear disarmament itself; I would refer in

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that connection to the maintenance of equal security, the maintenance or re-establishment of a balance at a progressively lower level of armaments and the taking into account of regional factors.

Bearing in mind these premises, the situation as regards the problem we are concerned with is dominated by two fundamental realities: first, nuclear weapons are to an overwhelming degree in the hands of two Powers; and secondly, the existence of nuclear weapons is a fundamental element of balance and hence of security in the part of the world concerned.

Any progress towards the halting of the nuclear arms race and then towards nuclear disarmament therefore depends on a twofold effort, which has already been begun:

That of the two Powers, which must agree on the definition of balance and on ceilings -- that is the purpose of the SALT negotiations -- and then at a later stage, on the gradual lowering of those ceilings;

The effort to be made within the geographical area of Europe to improve conditions of security and then gradually to reduce the level of conventional weapons. This is the purpose of proposals submitted by France -- and discussed at the Madrid Conference -- for the convening of a conference on disarmament in Europe the first phase of which would be devoted to the adoption of confidence-building measures.

The objectives sought in the one case as in the other are very closely allied, for an over-all balance is inseparable from balance in the European theatre.

It is this twofold balance that ensures the deterrent effect. It is the produce, on the two sides, of a number of component elements: both nuclear and conventional weapons form part of it, whence the destabilizing effect which would be produced by a non-use undertaking applying to the nuclear component.

At the global level -- that of the two largest Powers -- we believe that nuclear deterrence must be based on the establishment of an over-all balance. Contrary to some, we do not consider that deterrence so conceived inevitably leads to an effort to achieve superiority and consequently to an arms race, with the resultant risks of destabilization. The maintenance of deterrence should normally lead to an endeavour to eliminate or prevent any destabilizing effect; it should be compatible with the halting of the armaments race and the gradual reduction of armaments. We hope that the negotiations between the two Powers will proceed in this direction.

France, for its part, does not, of course, seek parity, but it intends to reinforce its security, by increasing the risk, in any conflict in which it might be attacked, for a possible adversary; this within the framework of the existing political and strategic situation.

(Mr. de la Gorce, France)

During our discussions at informal meetings, several delegations have raised questions about the Committee's role; they have emphasized that nuclear disarmament problems concern the international community as a whole. Since, in our view, disarmament is of interest to everyone, we consider that the Committee's competence covers the examination of those questions. The discussions we are engaged in with the participation of the five nuclear-weapon Powers is proof of this.

However, responsibilities as regards the undertaking of commitments rest principally with the nuclear-weapon countries. What we should consider here, depending on the course that future negotiations take, is how the Committee should express its views on the subject. I would recall, in that connection, that owing to the disproportion between existing arsenals, my country will contemplate an undertaking regarding its own weapons only if, as a result of negotiations between the two largest Powers, there is some change in that disproportion. We do not consider there is any justification for the idea of a proportional reduction on the basis of the present ratio of forces. Such a formula would merely perpetuate the present situation of bipolar advantage and extreme inequality that is not justified either by the scale of responsibilities or by the real needs of security.

Lastly, on this point, my delegation does not dispute either the inadequacies or the risks of a system of security based largely on nuclear deterrence. But this system has the merit of existing, and peace has been preserved for many years in the part of the world where it applies.

It would not be possible, without grave risk to stability, security and in the end peace, to eliminate or to render ineffective by an undertaking not to use it, the nuclear component of the over-all balance, or approximate parity, that exists in one part of the world. What we need to do, therefore, is to work towards changes which could lead gradually to the establishment of new conditions of security in which nuclear weapons would no longer have a place. We have referred to the twofold action, the dual effort which might lead to progress: the nuclear negotiations between the two largest Powers and the negotiations aimed at the strengthening of confidence and the reduction of conventional weapons in Europe. It is clear that success in those two enterprises is closely linked to success in parallel efforts to reduce tensions, remove threats, put an end to the use of force and restore confidence and a sense of security.

Such efforts and the progress which might ensue for international relations should also make it possible for the Committee on Disarmament to advance more decisively in its work.

Next week the Convention on the prohibition and limitation of the use of certain conventional weapons will be signed in New York. That is an important achievement in an area directly related to disarmament -- an area in which the competence of this Committee is, moreover, explicitly recognized in the preamble to the Convention. Let us hope that our work will also this year make a contribution to the difficult task of disarmament. On that contribution will to a large extent depend the success of the special session which the General Assembly is to hold next year, and also the confidence which the international community may still have in this Committee.

The CHAIRMAN: I thank the distinguished representative of France, Ambassador de la Gorce, for his statement. I thank him also for the kind words he addressed to the Chair.

Mr. ONKELINX (Belgium) (translated from French): I should like first of all, Mr. Chairman, to do what has become traditional in our Committee, which is to offer congratulations and good wishes to the successive Chairmen. As regards yourself, I do so all the more gladly and with all the more pleasure because the relations between our two States are particularly friendly, extensive, deep and untroubled, and because our personal relations are without the shadow of the slightest mistrust; and I am convinced that your skill, intelligence and knowledge of our problems -- of the problems we are discussing -- will enable you to carry out with great success your task as Chairman during the month of April, and that you will thus continue a certain tradition that has become established in our Committee, for since the beginning of this session we have had Chairmen of very high calibre, and in that connection I should like to take this opportunity to express our appreciation of the skilful and intelligent way in which Ambassador Herder, too, fulfilled the tasks of Chairman during the month of March. When we organized our work for this part of the 1981 session of the Committee on Disarmament, we decided to concentrate our attention during these two weeks on the question of chemical weapons.

I should like to take advantage of the opportunity thus offered us to recall the very great importance attached by the international community to the efforts being made with a view to the complete and effective prohibition of the development, production and stockpiling of these weapons and to arranging for their destruction. Furthermore, the Final Document of the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament stated that the conclusion of a convention prohibiting chemical weapons was one of the most urgent disarmament measures.

The efforts under way are at present being conducted in two different forums but, as the history of the negotiation of several international instruments has shown, these are perfectly complementary. In this connection, I would like to emphasize the importance of the first two reports submitted to the Committee on Disarmament, in 1979 and 1980 respectively, on the progress in the bilateral negotiations. I would also like to express my Government's satisfaction at the way in which the Working Group, which was established in 1980 and renewed this year, is conducting its work. The successive Chairmen of these working groups have played an important part in this context and I would like to tell Ambassadors Okawa and Lidgard how grateful we are to them for their work.

This Working Group is required by its mandate to "define, through substantive examination, issues to be dealt with in the negotiation on such a convention". It therefore seems essential that we should try to reconcile the different views which have been expressed up to now as to the matters which should be included in the Convention.

With respect to the scope of the convention, it seems to us that we should concentrate on those elements which at this stage have the greatest chance of producing a consensus. These are, we believe, the prohibition of the development, production, stockpiling, acquisition, retention and transfer of chemical weapons, and the consequent obligations, principally their destruction.

(Mr. Onkelinx, Belgium)

In this connection, it is obviously important to clarify the question of definitions as soon as possible. Belgium made its contribution, as did other countries, when in 1980 it submitted working paper CD/94 which was the subject of some amendment this year, as indicated in document CD/CW/CRP.7. This is an extremely complex area, and we shall probably not be able to consider identifying all the substances which could constitute a chemical warfare agent. Sooner or later we shall have to stop considering definitions for incorporation in a convention.

Ought we not therefore to provide that the control body to be established under the convention, for example, the consultative committee envisaged by the bilateral negotiators, shall be responsible for such identification in cases not specifically provided for by the convention? The convention would not then be weighed down by an excessive number of definitions which would probably not in any case be exhaustive. Furthermore, experience has shown us that many international instruments in the sphere of disarmament have been drawn up without the inclusion in the body of the convention, of a precise definition of the weapons or agents which are the subject of prohibition.

Another important question which has been brought up and debated is that of the inclusion of a prohibition on the use of chemical weapons in the convention we are contemplating. This suggestion is a matter of concern to my delegation, which is anxious not to tamper in any way, even indirectly, with the Geneva Protocol of 1925. Belgium feels that this is a matter of overriding political advisability.

Although it has not yet adopted a final position on the matter, Belgium has doubts as to whether in fact this proposal is feasible. Certainly, we should be able to agree to any formula if it met with a consensus in the Committee. Nevertheless, we would be inclined to think that if it appeared possible or necessary for the proposed convention to venture into the area of the prohibition of the use of chemical weapons, it should in that case confine itself to a simple reference to the Geneva Protocol of 1925 -- as is done in the Convention on the prohibition of bacteriological weapons -- and a renewed affirmation of its entire validity.

Some delegations feel on the other hand that this link between the Geneva Protocol and the convention on which we are working might be established rather by the provision in the convention of measures for the verification of use without, at the same time, use being included in the scope of the convention. We should be interested to hear other views held on this subject. As to ourselves, it appears to us more likely that we shall eventually give up the idea of including measures for the verification of use in the new convention. We thus feel that it would be more appropriate to look for similar measures under other auspices, starting from the 1925 Protocol which is silent on this matter.

In any case, we feel that the verification of international disarmament agreements is of primary importance. Why is this? Not because we attach any morbid inquisitorial value to it but rather because, as Jules Moch said, if there can be no control without disarmament -- an observation echoed recently by my Soviet colleague -- nor, he added, can there be disarmament without control. The two things are inseparable and it would be useless, we feel, to try to separate them and to deal with one before the other in the negotiations.

(Mr. Onkelinx, Belgium)

We also feel that adequate verification measures -- under strict and effective international control, to use the sacred formula-- increase the credibility of treaties and help build confidence where it is lacking or insufficient, or where it is marred by an atmosphere of suspicion.

We listened to Ambassador Issraelyan's speech before the Committee on 31 March. We should like to tell him that our approach to the matter of verification is not based on a concept of systematic distrust. On the contrary, it is based on a presumption of progress in international co-operation and of trust in States which -- like individuals -- are to be considered innocent until they are proved guilty. However, we must provide for the possibility that violations may occur. In the same way as an individual under suspicion cannot be allowed to be his own judge, so it cannot be left to States -- in spite of the respect due to them -- to apply these measures of control to themselves. It is for this reason, too, that we think that national verification measures can do no more than supplement international measures. Furthermore there is, it seems to me, some confusion as regards national measures with respect to this aspect of the matter of chemical weapons. Such measures are not usually concerned with the verification of what is going on outside the State. Their primary object is that Governments should adopt the requisite internal legislation to enable them to secure full respect for the prohibitions in their territory. These measures are certainly important, but they do not really contribute to the attainment of the objectives of verification as I have just described them.

It is hardly useful, I feel, to engage in too abstract a discussion on the subject of verification. In the disarmament agreements concluded up to now, control measures have always been appropriate to the particular prohibition.

The prohibition of chemical weapons includes aspects which should obviously lend themselves to automatic and easy on-site inspection, for example, the matters of the destruction of stocks and the dismantling or even the conversion of production facilities.

On the other hand, as regards the much more complex question of the verification of non-production, an approach could be envisaged which would be gradually more "intrusive", that is, methods of control which would become more and more meticulous as doubt increased, in spite of control efforts. This system would have the advantage of avoiding unnecessarily strict control from the very beginning. Such a system might, for example, start with verification by satellite and if it became necessary because of suspicion might then move on to on-site surveillance from a distance and then, if necessary, to surveillance from nearby and lastly to on-site inspection with the taking of samples. For this purpose it would be necessary to evaluate the so-called "off-site" verification methods. The international co-operation that already to some extent exists with respect to environmental pollution could provide a useful basis for this joint evaluation. Furthermore, even in the case of the verification of non-production, on-site inspection should not be a means of last resort, bearing with it an element of dramatization. It could be seen as something more routine, carried out on the basis both of a challenge and of the spot checking of production facilities.

We are confident in approaching these problems of verification of the prohibition of chemical weapons, for although they are certainly difficult, they are far from being insurmountable.



(Mr. Onkelinx, Belgium)

Thus, far from revealing distrust, a balanced and well thought out system for the verification of a disarmament agreement would, on the contrary, represent progress in international co-operation. There have been examples of disarmament agreements where the negotiators had perhaps not developed the verification measures sufficiently and where, because of that omission, some States have decided not to accede to those agreements. Recent experience has shown us that if those conventions had included provision for more elaborate verification machinery, the international community could perhaps have been spared accusations, suspicions and harsh exchanges. These are lessons which should guide us in our search for improvements in the development of future disarmament conventions.

In this matter of verification, as in other important aspects of the convention we are contemplating, the presence in Geneva, for two weeks, of experts from our various capitals will have helped to clarify many questions and to quicken the pace of our work.

Belgium will always be prepared to make its contribution towards the success of that work, which we hope will be rapid.

The CHAIRMAN: I thank the distinguished representative of Belgium, Ambassador Onkelinx, for his statement and for the particularly kind words he addressed to the chair.

The next plenary meeting of the Committee, to continue discussion of item 4 of our agenda, will be held on Friday, 3 April 1981 at 3.30 p.m.

The meeting rose at 1.05 p.m.